

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TUNIS 04088 080708Z
ACTION NEA-11

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 4088

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PPDC, TS
SUBJ: NOUIRA VISIT

REF: TUNIS 3319

1. DURING A TALK ON SEVERAL TOPICS JUNE 6 WITH HABIB BOURGUIBA, JR., SPECIAL ADVISOR TO THE PRESIDENT, HE TOLD ME HE HAD BEEN UNHAPPY TO HEAR THAT THE PROSPECTIVE VISIT OF PRIME MINISTER HEDI NOUIRA HAS SLIPPED TO LATTER HALF OF THIS YEAR. HE SAID HE WOULD TELL ME CONFIDENTIALLY THAT OUR LONG DELAY IN SETTING A DATE FOR THIS VISIT HAD BEGUN TO CAUSE NOUIRA TO WORRY THAT SOMETHING HAS HAPPENED TO THE CLOSE RELATIONSHIP THAT HAS SO LONG EXISTED BETWEEN TUNISIA AND THE UNITED STATES. HE SUGGESTED THAT THE EARLY ESTABLISHMENT OF DATES FOR THE VISIT, NO MATTER HOW FAR INTO THE FUTURE, WOULD BE REASSURING TO THE PRIME MINISTER.

2. I TOLD BOURGUIBA, JR. THAT HE COULD REASSURE THE PRIME MINISTER THAT (A) NOTHING HAS AFFECTED THE CLOSENESS OF OUR RELATIONSHIP, (B) THE SOLE CAUSE OF THE DELAY HAS BEEN THE EXTRAORDINARY WORKLOAD PRESIDENT CARTER HAS HAD TO SHOULDER IN ONE FOREIGN OR DOMESTIC CRISIS AFTER ANOTHER OVER THE PAST MANY MONTHS AND (C) PLANS FOR WASHINGTON VISITS BY FOREIGN LEADERS DURING THE SECOND HALF OF 1978 SHOULD SOON BE FIRMED UP.

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3. I SAID THAT I WOULD LET WASHINGTON KNOW OF OUR CONVERSATION. MULCAHY

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